PROSPECT; *or, View of the Moral World.*

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Comments upon the Sacred Writings of the Jews and Christians. Exodus Chapter 11.

THE continued ſeries of blunders and of villainy exhibited in this book, muſt be ſhocking to every correct mind, and ſtamp it with an odious character, which the ingenuity of prieſtcraft can never efface. This chapter, ſhort as it is, furniſhes a ſtriking verification of this remark. It begins with another threatening denunciation from the God of Moſes, that he would bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and the people of Egypt; inſtead however of declaring with correctneſs what this plague ſhould be, the account preſents us with a ſpecial command from Jehovah of an unjuſt and thieving nature relative to the conduct of his choſen people. He commands them to borrow the property of the Egyptians to accompliſh this object, whereas it is evident upon the very face of the record that the real intention was theft and ſpoliation, deceit, hypocricy and the manifeſtation of all thoſe vices by which the character of man is ſo often degraded. In verſe 2d it is thus ſaid. "Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of ſilver and jewels of gold," The very word borrowing includes the idea of repayment, and in deficiency of making ſuch return the perſon who borrows is conſidered in the light of a ſwindler, provided it was his intention at the time of borrowing never to pay again. This is exactly the fact in the preſent caſe; neither Moſes nor his God, nor the choſen people had any intention to return the goods or property which they had borrowed. They intended when they borrowed theſe jewels of gold and ſilver, to give the Egyptians leg bail for ſecurity. They had no intention to act upon fair, open and candid ground—deception was the leading feature of their conduct, and in this ſcene of hypocricy they were aided and abetted by the power and character of their God. A divinity of ſuch a character has forfeited all claim to human

adoration, and becomes the object of contempt and diſguſt to every intelligent mind. A God who either directly or indirectly commands theſt is no better than the thief himſelf; he joins his efforts and unites his power with the ſpoliators of the world—he is the coadjutor of villainy, abhorred by ſcience, ſpurned at by virtue, and held in univerſal contempt by the moral and intellectual powers of man. This deceptive and thieving buſineſs is followed by a bloody and ferocious intention on the part of Jehovah to murder the firſt born of Pharaoh and the people of Egypt, including alſo a vindictive temperament against the brute creation. In verſe 5th are theſe words, "And the firſt born in the land of Egypt ſhall die, from the firſt born of Pharaoh that ſetteth upon the throne, even unto the firſt born of the maid ſervant that is behind the mill; and all the firſt born of beaſts." We aſk of thoſe who believe this book to be divine, whether it was neceſſary for God to commit murder for the purpoſe of emancipating his choſen people? We aſk emphatically in the ſecond place, whether the objects of his wroth were well ſelected? If it was neceſſary to make a ſpecial diſplay of his divine vengeance, would it not have been more conſiſtent with the principles of juſtice to have ſeized upon Pharaoh and his ſubordinate agents, inſtead of offering up infantine innocence, and glutting himſelf with the gore of harmleſs babes? But this book is a diſtortion of every thing that is juſt—it theoretically and practically holds in abhorrence all the moral ſympathies of human exiſtence; it is a reproach to virtue, a diſhonour to the character of God, hoſtile to the immutable principles of juſtice and eſſentially deſtructive to the true intereſts of intellectual life. Moſes enliſts his God in all the ſchemes of villainy of which he was himſelf the author; he calls Heaven to aid him in his projects—Heaven bows in humble ſubmiſſion to his mandates, and lies, theft, murder, deception and hypocricy ſtain the annals of the Jewiſh hiſtory, and mark the character of this partial divinity with immoral traits injurious to all the ſentiments of virtue, and calculated to hold the world in bondage for ever.

Hints towards forming a Society for enquiring into the Truth or Falshood of Ancient History, so far as History is connected with systems of Religion ancient and modern.

It has been cuſtomary to claſs Hiſtory into three diviſions, diſtinguiſhed by the names of *Sacred*, *Prophane*, and Eccleſiaſtical. By the firſt is meant the *Bible*; by the ſecond, the hiſtory of nations, of men and things; and by third, the hiſtory of the church and its prieſthood.

Nothing is more eaſy than to give names, and therefore mere names ſignify nothing unleſs they lead to the diſcovery of some cauſe for which that name was given: For example, *Sunday* is the name given to the firſt day of the week, in the Engliſh language, and it is the ſame in the Latin, that is, it has the ſame meaning, (*Dies Solis*) and alſo in the German, and in ſeveral other languages. Why then was this name given to that day? Becauſe it was the day dedicated by the ancient world to the luminary, which in Engliſh we call the Sun, and therefore the day *Sun-day*, or the day of the Sun; as in the like manner we call the ſecond day Monday, the day dedicated to the Moon.

Here the name, *Sunday*, leads to the cauſe of its being called ſo, and we have viſible evidence of the fact, becauſe we behold the Sun from whence the name comes; but this is not the caſe when we diſtinguiſh one part of hiſtory from another by the name of *sacred*. All hiſtories have been written by men. We have no evidence, nor any cauſe to believe, that any have been written by God. That part of the Bible called the Old Teſtament, is the Hiſtory of the Jewiſh nation, from the time of Abraham, which begins in the 11th chap of Geneſis to the downfall of that nation by Nebuchadnezar, and is no more entitled to be called ſacred than any other hiſtory. It is altogether the contrivance of prieſtcraft that has given it that name. So far from its being *sacred* it has not the appearance of being true in many of the things it relates. It muſt be better authority than a book, which any impoſture might make, as Mahomet made the Koran, to make

a thoughtful man believe that the Sun and Moon ſtood ſtill, or that Moſes and Aaron turned the Nile, which is larger than the Delaware, into blood, and that the Egyptian magicians did the ſame. Theſe things have too much the appearance of romance to be believed for fact.

It would be of uſe to enquire, and aſcertain the time, when that part of the Bible called the Old Teſtament firſt appeared. From all that can be collected there was no ſuch book till after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, and that it is the work of the Phariſees of the Second Temple. How they came to make the 19th chapter of the 2d book of King, and the 37 of Iſaiah, word for word alike, can only be accounted for by their having no plan to go by, and not knowing what they were about. The ſame is the caſe with reſpect to the laſt verſes in the 2d book of Chronicles, and the firſt verſes in Ezra, they alſo are word for word alike, which ſhews that the Bible has been put together at random.

But beſides theſe things there is great reaſon to believe we have been impoſed upon, with reſpect to the antiquity of the bible, and eſpecially with reſpect to the books aſcribed to Moſes. Herodotus, who is called the father of hiſtory, and is the moſt ancient hiſtorian whoſe works have reached to our time, and who travelled into Egypt, converſed with the prieſts, hiſtorians, aſtronomers, and learned men of that country, for the purpoſe of obtaining all the information of it he could, and who gives an account of the ancient ſtate of it, makes no mention of ſuch a man as Moſes, though the Bible makes him to have been the greateſt hero there, nor of any one circumſtance mentioned in the book of Exodus, reſpecting Egypt, ſuch as turning the rivers into blood, the duſt into lice, the death of the firſt born throughout all the land of Egypt, the paſſage of the Red-Sea, the drowning of Pharaoh and all his hoſt, things which could not have been a ſecret in Egypt, and muſt have been generally known, had they been facts; and therefore as no ſuch things were known in Egypt, nor any ſuch man as Moſes, at the time Herodotus was there, which is about two

thouſand two hundred years ago, it ſhews that the account of theſe things in the book aſcribed to Moſes is a made ſtory of later times, that is, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and that Moſes is not the author of the books aſcribed to him.

With reſpect the coſmogony, or account of the creation in the firſt chapter of Geneſis, of the Garden of Eden in the ſecond chapter, and of what is called the fall of man in the third chapter, there is ſomething concerning them we are not hiſtorically acquainted with. In none of the books of the bible after Geneſis, are any of theſe things mentioned, or even alluded to. How is this to be accounted for? The obvious inference is, that either they were not known, or not believed to be facts, by the writers of the other books of the bible, and that Moſes is not the author of the chapters where theſe accounts are given.

The next queſtion on the caſe is, how did the Jews come by theſe notions and at what time were they written?

To anſwer this queſtion we muſt firſt conſider what the ſtate of the world was at the time the Jews began to be a people, for the Jews are but a modern race, compared with the antiquity of other nations. At the time there were, even by their own account, but thirteen Jews or Iſraelites in the world, *Jacob and his twelve ſons*, and four of theſe were baſtards. The nations of Egypt, Chaldea, Perſia and India, were great and populous, abounding in learning and ſcience, particularly in the knowledge of aſtronomy of which the jews were always ignorant. The chronological tables mention, that Eclypſis were obſerved at Babylon above two thouſand years before the Chriſtian era, which was before there was a ſingle Jew or Iſraelite in the world.

All thoſe ancient nations had their cosmogonies, that is their accounts, how the creation was made, long before there was ſuch people as Jews or Iſraelites. An account of the coſmogonies of India and Perſia is given by Henry Lord, Chaplain to the Eaſt India Company, at Surat, and

publiſhed in London in 1630. The writer of this has has ſeen a copy of the edition of 1630, and made extracts from it. The work, which is now ſcarce, was dedicated by Lord to the Arch Biſhop of Canterbury.

We know that the Jews were carried captives into Babylon, by Nebuchadnezar, and remained in captivity ſeveral years, when they were liberated by Cyrus, king of Perſia. During their captivity they would have had an opportunity of acquiring ſome knowledge of the coſmogony of the Perſians, or at leaſt of getting ſome ideas how to fabricate one to put at the head of their own hiſtory after their return from captivity. This will account for the cauſe, for ſome cauſe there muſt have been, that no mention nor reference is made to the coſmogony in Geneſis in any of the books of the bible, ſuppoſed to have been written before the captivity, nor is the name of Adam to be found in any of thoſe books.

The Books of Chronicles were written after the return of the Jews from captivity, for the third chapter of the firſt book gives a liſt of all the Jewiſh kings from David to Zedekiah, who was carried captive to Babylon, and to four generations beyond the time of Zedekiah. In the firſt verſe of the firſt chapter of this book the name of Adam is mentioned, but not in any book in the bible, written before that time, nor could it be, for Adam and Eve are names taken from the coſmogony of the Perſians. Henry Lord, in his book, written from Surat, and dedicated, as I have already ſaid, to the Arch-Biſhop of Canterbury, ſays that in the Perſian coſmogony of the name of the firſt man was *Adamoh* and of the woman *Hevah*.* From hence comes the Adam and Eve of the book of Geneſis. In the coſmogony of India, of which I ſhall ſpeak in a future number, the name of the firſt man was *Pourous*, and of the woman *Parcoutee*. We want a knowledge of the Sanſcrit language of India to underſtand the meaning of the names, and I mentioned it in this place, only

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* In an Engliſh edition of the Bible, in 1583, the firſt woman is called Hevah. *Editor.*

to ſhow that it is from the coſmogony of Perſia rather than that of India that the coſmogony in Geneſis has been fabricated by the Jews, who returned from captivity by the liberality of Cyrus, King of Perſia. There is, however, reaſon to conclude, on the authority of Sir William Jones, who reſided ſeveral years in India, that theſe names were very expreſſive in the language to which they belonged, for in ſpeaking of this language he ſays (ſee the Aſiatic reſearches) "The Sanſcrit language, whatever be "its antiquity, is of wonderful ſtructure; it is more per- "fect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and "more exquiſitely refined than either."

Theſe hints, which are intended to be continued, will ſerve to ſhew that a ſociety for enquiring into the ancient ſtate of the world, and the ſtate of ancient hiſtory, ſo far as hiſtory is connected with ſyſtems of religion ancient and modern, may become a uſeful and inſtructive inſtitution. There is good reaſon to believe we have been in great error, with reſpect to the antiquity of the Bible, as well as impoſed upon by its contents. Truth ought to be the object of every man; for without truth there can be no real happineſs to a thoughtful mind, nor any aſſurance of happineſs hereafter. It is the duty of man to obtain all the knowledge he can and then make the beſt uſe of it.

T. P.

Profession of Faith from Rousseau, continued.

Of what hurt is the wickedneſs of a Cataline to me? Am I afraid of falling a victim to his villainy? Wherefore, then, do I look upon him with the ſame horror as if he was my contemporary? We do not hate the wicked only becauſe their vices are hurtful, but alſo becauſe they are wicked.

We are not only deſirous of happineſs for ourſelves, but alſo of the happineſs of others; and when that happineſs does not diminiſh ours, it neceſſarily increaſes it. In a word, we cannot help ſympathizing with the unfortunate, and always ſuffer when we witneſs their miſery. The moſt perverſe natures cannot be altogether diveſted of this ſympathy; though we ſee it frequently make them

act in contradiction to themſelves. The robber who ſtrips the paſſenger on the highway, will frequently diſtribute his ſpoils, to cover the nakedneſs of the poor, and the moſt barbarous aſſaſſin may be induced humanely to ſupport a man falling into a fit.

We hear daily of the cries of remorſe, and the goadings of conſcience for ſecret crimes; and ſee remarkable inſtances of their frequently bringing them to light. Alas! who is a total ſtranger to this importunate voice? We ſpeak of it from experience, and would be glad to ſilence ſo diſagreeable a monitor. But let us be obedient to Nature; we know that her government is ever mild and gracious; and that nothing is more agreeable than that teſtimony of a good conſcience, which ever follows our obſervance of her laws. The wicked man is afraid of, and ſhuns himſelf; he turns his eyes on every ſide, in ſearch of objects to amuſe him; without an opportunity for ſatire and raillery, he would be always ſad: his only pleaſure lies in mockery and inſult.

To be continued.

Our Subſcribers in the city of New-York, who have not made their ſecond half year's payment, will oblige the Editor by doing it as ſoon as poſſible. Subſcribers in Orange County will pleaſe to pay to Doctor Hedges; thoſe in Dutcheſs County to Mr. Rufus Spalding, Rhinebeck; thoſe in Philadelphia to Mr. Iſaac Hall, corner of Vine and Front-ſtreet; thoſe in every other part of the country will pleaſe to tranſmit their ſeveral dues by poſt, or otherwiſe as may be moſt convenient.

*** A Discourse on the baneful effects of ancient superstition, will be delivered by the Editor, to-morrow evening at 8 o'clock, at Shepherd's Long-Room, No. 11, George's-street.

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